

## Everything Makes Too Much Noise On First Day Of Year

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Page 10

MERTZON — Shortgrass Country holidays are the same as those in the rest of the nation. The kids reap the spoils; their parents change their social schedule to courses that cause side effects that would bring panic to the recovery room of any large hospital most of the elders recede into such a weakened condition that Hong Kong viruses and Calcutta bugs are unable to gain a foothold.

Also, as in other parts of the country, the noise factor is increased. For example, on New Year's Day I helped one of my compadres ease a couple of Alka Seltzer tablets from a long bottle. We found that the friction of the cotton stopper grating against the glass had changed from a practically inaudible "swish" to the same loud, abrasive noise that is heard around machine shops. Then, after resting a bit, we discovered that the once soothing echo of the tablets dissolving in water had changed to the clashing roar of a waterfall. We were trying to calculate the decibel value of the sound when a neighbor's cat ran across the front porch and disrupted our computations.

By lunch time we'd had several other opportunities to observe the strange holiday phenomenon. One of my sons hooked up a stone polisher in the bathroom. As my daughter's hair drier chorused its awful tune, the rock-smoothing device drilled out a murderously rhythmic "kapocte, kapocte, kapocte."

In the kitchen the pilot light on the stove made an ear-shattering racket as it flicked on and off. A careless bird spoiled the stillness of the outdoors by dropping straws on the frozen ground. A television sports announcer blabbed about how truly wonderful it was that the state university band had been able to make a drum nearly as big as an oil tank. My partner was grasping for life with the determination of an amateur mountain climber. His chances of survival seemed mighty dim.

As this is being written, the holidays have ended. Christmas tress are lying out in the yards and everybody had gone back to work. And, as on every New Year's week, what we in the Shortgrass County need to hear now is the ticking of a market increase, followed by rain splattering off our house tops.